

Federal Communications Commission

§ 76.630

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 65 FR 53616, Sept. 5, 2000, § 76.620, paragraph (a) was amended by removing § 76.615(b)(1) through (6)" and adding in its place "§§ 76.1804(a) through (f)," and by removing "§ 76.615(b)(7)" and adding in its place "§ 76.1804(g)", and in paragraph (b) by removing " § 76.615(b)(2)" and adding in its place "§ 76.1804(b)", effective Oct. 5, 2000.

§ 76.630 Compatibility with consumer electronics equipment.

(a) Cable system operators shall not scramble or otherwise encrypt signals carried on the basic service tier. Requests for waivers of this prohibition must demonstrate either a substantial problem with theft of basic tier service or a strong need to scramble basic signals for other reasons. As part of this showing, cable operators are required to notify subscribers by mail of waiver requests. The notice to subscribers must be mailed no later than thirty calendar days from the date the request waiver was filed with the Commission, and cable operators must inform the Commission in writing, as soon as possible, of that notification date. The notification to subscribers must state:

On (date of waiver request was filed with the Commission), (cable operator's name) filed with the Federal Communications Commission a request for waiver of the rule prohibiting scrambling of channels on the basic tier of service. 47 CFR § 76.630(a). The request for waiver states (a brief summary of the waiver request). A copy of the request for waiver is on file for public inspection at (the address of the cable operator's local place of business).

Individuals who wish to comment on this request for waiver should mail comments to the Federal Communications Commission by no later than 30 days from (the date the notification was mailed to subscribers). Those comments should be addressed to the: Federal Communications Commission, Cable Services Bureau, Washington, DC 20554, and should include the name of the cable operator to whom the comments are applicable. Individuals should also send a copy of their comments to (the cable operator at its local place of business).

Cable operators may file comments in reply no later than 7 days from the date subscriber comments must be filed.

(b) Cable system operators that provide their subscribers with cable system terminal devices and other cus-

tomers premises equipment that incorporates remote control capability shall permit the remote operation of such devices with commercially available remote control units or otherwise take no action that would prevent the devices from being operated by a commercially available remote control unit. Cable system operators are advised that this requirement obliges them to actively enable the remote control functions of customer premises equipment where those functions do not operate without a special activation procedure. Cable system operators may, however, disable the remote control functions of a subscriber's customer premises equipment where requested by the subscriber.

(c) Cable system operators that use scrambling, encryption or similar technologies in conjunction with cable system terminal devices, as defined in § 15.3(e) of this chapter, that may affect subscribers' reception of signals shall offer to supply each subscriber with special equipment that will enable the simultaneous reception of multiple signals. The equipment offered shall include a single terminal device with dual descramblers/decoders and/or timers and bypass switches. Other equipment, such as two independent set-top terminal devices may be offered at the same time that the single terminal device with dual tuners/descramblers is offered. For purposes of this rule, two set-top devices linked by a control system that provides functionality equivalent to that of a single device with dual descramblers is considered to be the same as a terminal device with dual descramblers/decoders.

(1) The offer of special equipment shall be made to new subscribers at the time they subscribe and to all subscribers at least once each year.

(2) Such special equipment shall, at a minimum, have the capability:

(i) To allow simultaneous reception of any two scrambled or encrypted signals and to provide for tuning to alternative channels on a pre-programmed schedule; and

(ii) To allow direct reception of all other signals that do not need to be processed through descrambling or decryption circuitry (this capability can generally be provided through a

separate by-pass switch or through internal by-pass circuitry in a cable system terminal device).

(3) Cable system operators shall determine the specific equipment needed by individual subscribers on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the subscriber. Cable system operators are required to make a good faith effort to provide subscribers with the amount and types of special equipment needed to resolve their individual compatibility problems.

(4) Cable operators shall provide such equipment at the request of individual subscribers and may charge for purchase or lease of the equipment and its installation in accordance with the provisions of the rate regulation rules for customer premises equipment used to receive the basic service tier, as set forth in § 76.923. Notwithstanding the required annual offering, cable operators shall respond to subscriber requests for special equipment for reception of multiple signals that are made at any time.

(d) Cable system operators shall provide a consumer education program on compatibility matters to their subscribers in writing, as follows:

(1) The consumer information program shall be provided to subscribers at the time they first subscribe and at least once a year thereafter. Cable operators may choose the time and means by which they comply with the annual consumer information requirement. This requirement may be satisfied by a once-a-year mailing to all subscribers. The information may be included in one of the cable system's regular subscriber billings.

(2) The consumer information program shall include the following information:

(i) Cable system operators shall inform their subscribers that some models of TV receivers and videocassette recorders may not be able to receive all of the channels offered by the cable system when connected directly to the cable system. In conjunction with this information, cable system operators shall briefly explain, the types of channel compatibility problems that could occur if subscribers connected their equipment directly to the cable system and offer suggestions for resolving

those problems. Such suggestions could include, for example, the use of a cable system terminal device such as a set-top channel converter. Cable system operators shall also indicate that channel compatibility problems associated with reception of programming that is not scrambled or encrypted programming could be resolved through use of simple converter devices without descrambling or decryption capabilities that can be obtained from either the cable system or a third party retail vendor.

(ii) In cases where service is received through a cable system terminal device, cable system operators shall indicate that subscribers may not be able to use special features and functions of their TV receivers and videocassette recorders, including features that allow the subscriber to: view a program on one channel while simultaneously recording a program on another channel; record two or more consecutive programs that appear on different channels; and, use advanced picture generation and display features such as "Picture-in-Picture," channel review and other functions that necessitate channel selection by the consumer device.

(iii) In cases where cable system operators offer remote control capability with cable system terminal devices and other customer premises equipment that is provided to subscribers, they shall advise their subscribers that remote control units that are compatible with that equipment may be obtained from other sources, such as retail outlets. Cable system operators shall also provide a representative list of the models of remote control units currently available from retailers that are compatible with the customer premises equipment they employ. Cable system operators are required to make a good faith effort in compiling this list and will not be liable for inadvertent omissions. This list shall be current as of no more than six months before the date the consumer education program is distributed to subscribers. Cable operators are also required to encourage subscribers to contact the cable operator to inquire about whether a particular remote control unit the subscriber might be considering for purchase

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would be compatible with the subscriber's customer premises equipment.

NOTE 1 TO § 76.630: The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section are applicable July 31, 1994, and June 30, 1994, respectively.

NOTE 2 TO § 76.630: § 76.1621 contains certain requirements pertaining to a cable operator's offer to supply subscribers with special equipment that will enable the simultaneous reception of multiple signals.

NOTE 3 TO § 76.630: § 76.1622 contains certain requirements pertaining to the provision of a consumer education program on compatibility matters to subscribers.

[59 FR 25342, May 16, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 18510, Apr. 26, 1996; 65 FR 53616, Sept. 5, 2000]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 65 FR 53616, Sept. 5, 2000, § 76.630 was amended by removing paragraphs (c) and (d), by revising the note and by adding notes 2 and 3, effective Oct. 5, 2000. For the convenience of the user, the superseded text is set forth as follows:

§ 76.630 Compatibility with consumer electronics equipment.

* * * * *

NOTE: § 76.630: The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section are applicable July 31, 1994, and June 30, 1994, respectively. The provisions of paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section are applicable October 31, 1994, except for the requirement under paragraph (c) of this section for cable system operators to supply cable system terminal devices with dual tuners (as needed), which is applicable October 31, 1995. The initial offer of special equipment to all subscribers, as required under paragraph (c) of this section, shall be made by October 31, 1994.

Subpart L—Cable Television Access

§ 76.701 Leased access channels.

(a) Notwithstanding 47 U.S.C. 532(b)(2) (Communications Act of 1934, as amended, section 612), a cable operator, in accordance with 47 U.S.C. 532(h) (Cable Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, section 10(a)), may adopt and enforce prospectively a written and published policy of prohibiting programming which, it reasonably believes, describes or depicts sexual or excretory activities or organs in a patently offensive manner as meas-

ured by contemporary community standards.

(b) A cable operator may refuse to transmit any leased access program or portion of a leased access program that the operator reasonably believes contains obscenity, indecency or nudity.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (b): "Nudity" in paragraph (b) is interpreted to mean nudity that is obscene or indecent.

[62 FR 28373, May 23, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 35950, July 2, 1999]

§ 76.702 Public access.

A cable operator may refuse to transmit any public access program or portion of a public access program that the operator reasonably believes contains obscenity.

[62 FR 28373, May 23, 1997]

Subpart M—Cable Inside Wiring

§ 76.800 Definitions.

(a) *MDU*. A multiple dwelling unit building (e.g., an apartment building, condominium building or cooperative).

(b) *MDU owner*. The entity that owns or controls the common areas of a multiple dwelling unit building.

(c) *MVPD*. A multichannel video programming distributor, as that term is defined in Section 602(13) of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. 522(13).

(d) *Home run wiring*. The wiring from the demarcation point to the point at which the MVPD's wiring becomes devoted to an individual subscriber or individual loop.

[62 FR 61031, Nov. 14, 1997]

§ 76.801 Scope.

The provisions of this subpart set forth rules and regulations for the disposition, after a subscriber voluntarily terminates cable service, of that cable home wiring installed by the cable system operator or its contractor within the premises of the subscriber. The provisions do not apply where the cable home wiring belongs to the subscriber, such as where the operator has transferred ownership to the subscriber, the operator has been treating the wiring as belonging to the subscriber for tax purposes, or the wiring is considered to be a fixture by state or local law in the